

# GAUTIER

**WATERFRONT OPPORTUNITIES**

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1991

**GAUTIER WATERFRONT OPPORTUNITIES  
1990**

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- \* Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Manager of BMR Coastal Programs
- \* Dr. Curtis Davis, Dean, Jackson County Junior College
- \* Mr. Roger Clark, Director, Jackson County Planning Commission

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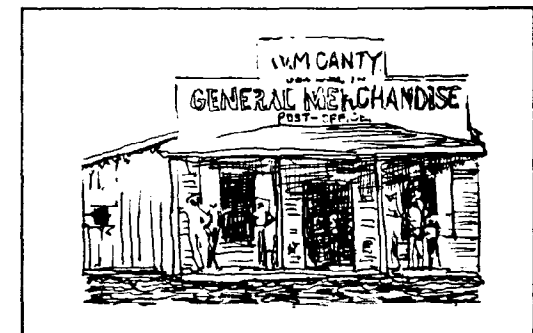
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## I. BACKGROUND

## I. BACKGROUND

- Introduction
- Study Scope
- Historic Perspective

## INTRODUCTION

Bordering the Gulf of Mexico is a band of real estate known to geographers as the "Sun Belt". Since the 17th century, explorers and pioneers from Europe have been attracted to this area because of the abundant natural resources and the rare beauty and comfortable life style that it would support. In recent history, coastal areas along the entire Gulf of Mexico have drawn increased numbers of tourists and retirees as well as industries and their associated work forces. Increased development brings with it the potential to destroy the amenities that were its wellspring, namely the natural environment and the living resources of that environment.

In the last decade, many communities across America and the world have rediscovered the importance and value of their particular waterfronts. From simple improvements such as piers and boat launches, to elaborate development projects, waterfront and shoreline awareness has been re-established as both a means to meet recreational demand and to stimulate economic development. It has not seemed to matter whether communities possess rivers, lakes, bays or ocean frontage, plans are being made to harness the power of the waterfront for public access and enjoyment. Long before Gautier was incorporated, development along the many miles of the fresh and saltwater shorelines has occurred. Summer homes, shipping of raw materials, fish camps and permanent residences over time have utilized much of Gautier's shoreline, leaving very little for the general public's access and use.

Contained within this study is information to help make informed decisions about coastal development. One purpose of this study is to provide a starting point for the City of Gautier to understand the environment, the risks, the opportunities and ways to conserve, and yet utilize these precious coastal resources. Residents, tourists, hunters and fishermen, and those who earn a living in the commerce and industry of the coast will gain or lose according to the directions taken with further coastal development.

## SCOPE OF GAUTIER WATERFRONT STUDY

Purpose: The study is designed to identify the potential for enhanced

- \* waterfront public use and recreation access
- \* water-related economic development
- \* shoreline conservation and preservation

. . . and to recommend development strategies for public and private investment over the next ten to twenty years.

Criteria:

- \* establishing water-oriented uses and activities
- \* increasing public access to the shoreline
- \* increasing the visual quality of the shorefront area,
- \* providing for a safer waterfront environment
- \* encouraging appropriate land and water use
- \* encouraging concentrations of urban development in or adjacent to the waterfront
- \* considering the maximum use of public facilities and coastal resources
- \* considering floodplains, wetlands and natural hazards



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A driving force behind the attractiveness of Gautier's waterfront is deeply rooted in its heritage. Being located by the water and having an economy traditionally based upon water-dependent businesses and industries have greatly influenced the growth of Gautier. Further growth can be tied to Gautier's rich historical background and water resources if pursued sensibly and cautiously.

The first known Europeans to explore the Gulf Coast were the Portuguese and the Spanish during the 1500s. These early attempts to establish a settlement were a failure primarily because of a devastating hurricane that destroyed the small fleet and the fledgling colony in 1588. The Spanish stopped all colonizing efforts and the area was abandoned until French exploration began nearly 100 years later when Robert Cavelier de la Salle sailed down the Mississippi River in 1682. In 1688, Henri de Tonti followed and explored the Gulf Coast area of Mississippi, Alabama and West Florida.

In 1699, the first French settlement was established by Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. According to d'Iberville's journal, he first decided on a place near the mouth of the Pascagoula River on the west side of the bay - possibly the present site of the Old Place Plantation. The site was relocated and construction of Fort Maurepas was begun in what is now Ocean Springs.

In 1726, Joseph Simon de la Pointe completed a Canadian style home marking the beginning of his estate; the only remaining building is now known as the Old Spanish Fort. Other families



establishing homesteads in this area at this time were the Krebs, Gravelines and Rillieux.

The French enjoyed a very good relationship with Biloxi and Pascagoula Indians. The Indians showed the French much about the bountiful resources of the area which further strengthened the attraction of the coast for the explorers.

After three years, d'Iberville moved the settlement to what is now Mobile with anchorage at Dolphin Island. Shoaling in the Island's harbor rendered it useless, the settlement was moved back to Old Biloxi in 1719 and Ship Island became the new anchorage. For many years, colonizing efforts centered on Mobile and New Orleans and the intervening coast remained wild, or based on subsistence settlements with the Indians.

In 1763, the Gulf Coast area between the Mississippi River and West Florida passed into English control. Coastal development still did not flourish, but British efforts to regain a "new world" foothold increased after the Revolutionary War. This resurgence of British Colonization led to the fortification of the barrier islands along the entire Gulf Coast at Mobile Point, Fort Pickens, Fort Morgan, Fort Gaines and Fort Massachusetts. As a result of fortifying the Gulf Coast at these various strategic locations, the mainland shore began to see "summer camps" develop beginning about 1830. Growth during this period can be attributed in large part to the construction of the first military road by Andrew Jackson in the 1820s.

Other than the seasonal influx of these early tourists going between Mobile and New Orleans, life for permanent residents consisted of fishing and farming until the Civil War. In the late 1860s, Fernando Upton Gautier moved to West Pascagoula



Fernando Upton Gautier

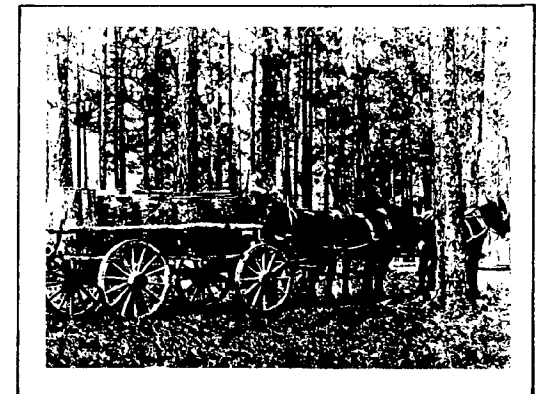
(Gautier), built an estate overlooking the Singing River and established a lumber mill named " F. Gautier & Sons." Gautier died in 1891 and is buried in the town that bears his name.

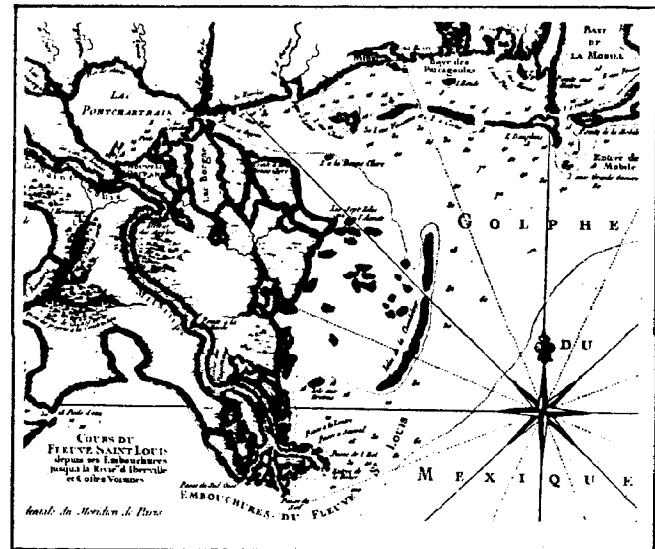
A second factor that stimulated growth and commerce particularly in Gautier was the chartering of the New Orleans, Mobile and Chattanooga Railroad Company in 1867. Under the charter, the railroad between New Orleans and Mobile was completed. Completion of the railroad in 1879 fostered an expansion of an already brisk lumber, cotton, turpentine and charcoal trade.

Growth accelerated after the war between the states, and by the turn of the century the Mississippi Gulf Coast was coming to national attention as a resort area. Warm climate, refreshing breezes, abundant fish and wildlife supported an emerging tourism industry.

One factor that has constantly ushered growth along the entire Gulf Coast is the Old Spanish Trail. This trail is one of the oldest roads in the United States and was first used by the Indians, and later by the Spaniards, French, and English. Today this route is known as U. S. Highway 90. No road in the United States has a more romantic history than the Old Spanish Trail.

Beginning in Saint Augustine, Florida, the Old Spanish Trail threads its way for 2,900 miles across the U. S. to San Diego, California. It took nearly 200 years before the faint trail connected these two cities but, once in place, many settlements were established and commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific was possible.





## II. INVENTORY

## II. INVENTORY

- Study Area
- Shoreline
- Public Access
- Land Use & Zoning
- Tidelands
- Upland Wetlands

## STUDY AREA

There are approximately 38 miles of shoreline within the City of Gautier. The total shoreline is unevenly split by Mary Walker and Sioux Bayous, the West Pascagoula River and the Mississippi Sound. The City of Gautier has three distinct types of shorelines.

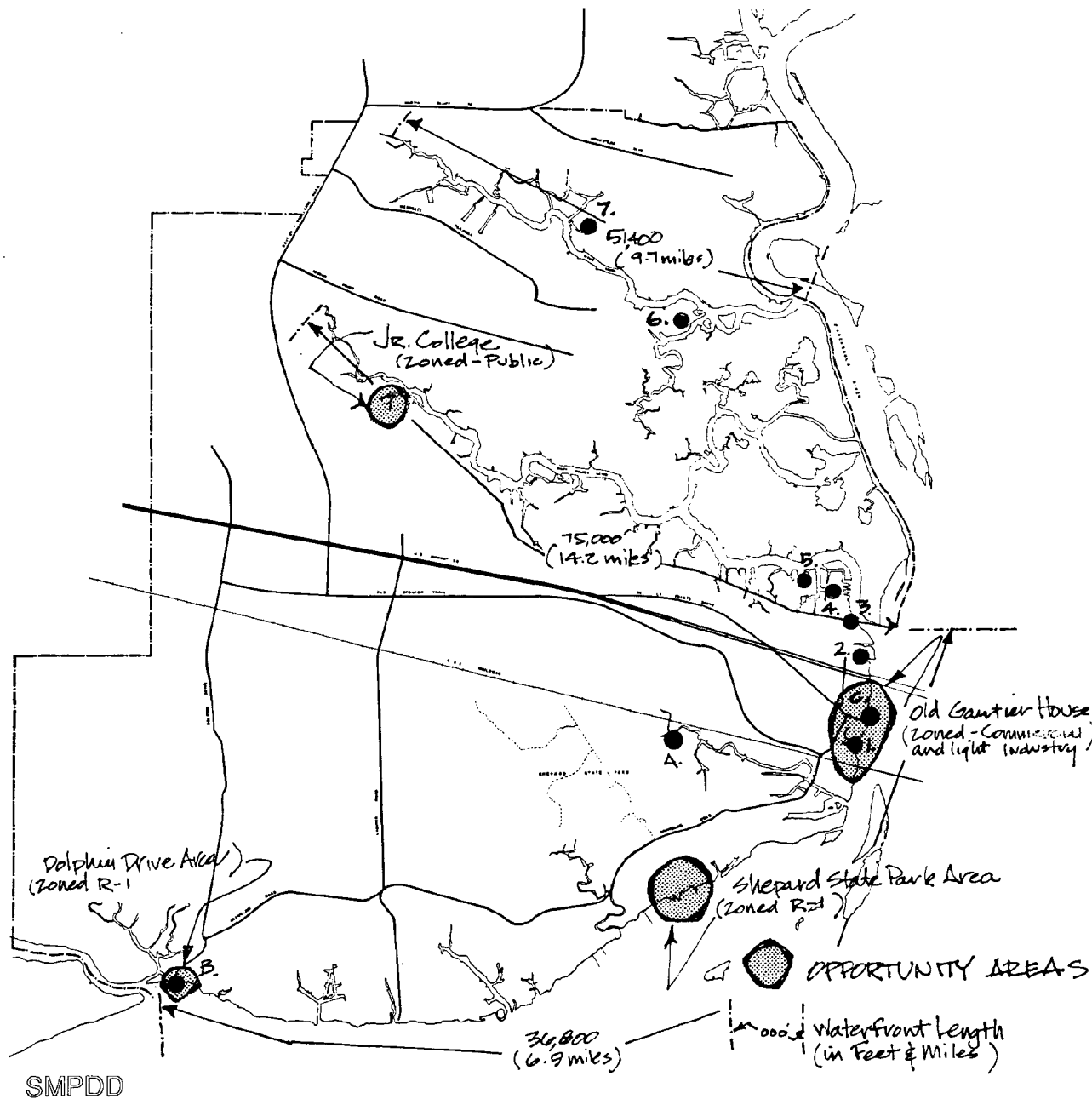
First is the marshland environment of Sioux Bayou and Mary Walker Bayou. Both of these bayous extend into the city in a northwesterly direction. Land use along these shorelines is almost exclusively residential, interspersed with commercial uses of the marine-related variety. Over the years "new" shoreline was created for residential development by the dredging of finger canals for boating purposes. Development within these areas has been a result of a "fishing camp" - based economic activity or as summer homes and/or retreats. The length of the shoreline of the Mary Walker and Sioux Bayous is 9.7 and 14.2 miles respectively.

The second shoreline area is along the West Pascagoula River, from the northern city limits to its confluence with the Mississippi Sound. The West Pascagoula shoreline is approximately 7.2 miles long. This shoreline is represented by a variety of land uses comprising residential, commercial, semi-public and industrial. The West Pascagoula shoreline has historically been at the center of residential and commercial activity for the Gautier community. This is particularly so in the vicinity of U. S. Highway 90, the CSX Railroad, and at the confluences of Mary Walker Bayou with the West Pascagoula River. In fact, the Old Spanish Trail and the surrounding area was quite a hub of commercial, residential and

social activity from the community's inception in the late 1600s until today. The West Pascagoula shoreline is typical of large riverine systems, supporting an abundant and diversified ecosystem.

The third distinct shoreline area is that portion of the city which borders the Mississippi Sound. This area is now and has been for many years developed as summer homes and permanent residences for both affluent seasonal visitors and locals able to afford waterfront property. This shoreline can be characterized as typical natural coastal bluff. Coastal bluff shorelines are a product of a shoreline retreating into an upland. Wave erosion, especially during storms, undercuts and steepens the slope, which causes slumping. The beach at the base of the bluff is often very narrow or in some cases non-existent. Residents maintaining homes along this shoreline have and will continue to experience problems with erosion and shoreline retreat.

## SHORELINE, OPPORTUNITY AREAS AND ACCESS POINTS



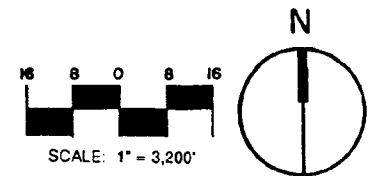
### ACCESS POINTS

#### PUBLIC

- A. Shepard State Park Ramp
- B. Dolphin Street Ramp
- C. Fishing Pier/De La Pointe "Bridge End"

#### PRIVATE

- 1. West River Marine
- 2. Huck's Fish Camp
- 3. Tucei's Fish Camp
- 4. Gautier Marina
- 5. Mary Walker Marina
- 6. Indian Point Marina
- 7. Sioux Bayou Fish Camp



# CITY OF GAUTIER



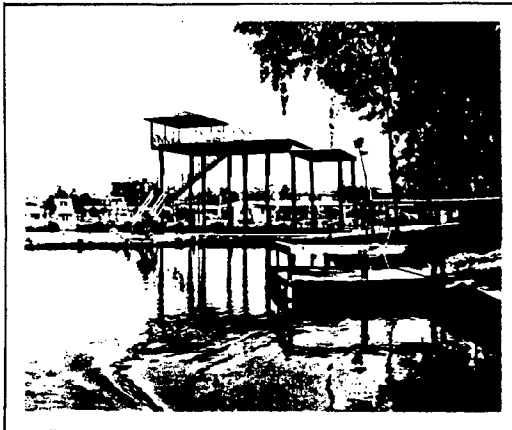
## SHORELINE

Of the smaller coastal communities in Mississippi, Gautier has perhaps the most amount of total shoreline length for its land area. Unfortunately, only a very small portion of the shoreline is accessible to the public.

There are four major waterways that contribute to the estimated 201,400 linear feet (38 miles) of shoreline:

- \* Sioux Bayou - 51,400 ft (9.7 miles)  
92 Waterfront properties zoned residential
- \* Mary Walker Bayou - 75,000 ft (14.2 miles)  
118 Waterfront properties zoned residential  
17 Waterfront properties zoned commercial
- \* West Pascagoula River - 38,200 ft (7.2 miles)  
15 Waterfront properties zoned residential  
16 Waterfront properties zoned commercial
- \* Mississippi Sound - 36,800 ft (6.7 miles)  
169 Waterfront properties zoned residential
- \* Total length of Gautier's Shoreline  
201,400 ft or 38.2 miles

394 properties zoned residential  
33 properties zoned commercial  
427 total waterfront properties



## PUBLIC ACCESS

Gautier's supply of public waterfront access points is very limited. Due to the continued growth and development of this area over the years, very little publicly accessible shoreline was set aside for recreational opportunities, let alone development of commercial waterfront projects involving the private sector. The accompanying map locates all known existing waterfront access points, both private and public. The only sites presently within public ownership are the Dolphin Avenue Boat Launch and the old "bridge-end" at de la Point Street. Shepard State Park has a boat launch for small boats for access to Bayou Pierre, but this bayou is blocked by bridges and does not afford easy access to the West Pascagoula River.

Coastwide, most of the municipalities and counties have developed streets perpendicular to the bays, rivers and waterways and have provided that those streets are for access to the waterways or beaches in perpetuity. These access ways, usually called "street ends," are often wide enough for limited parking in addition to pedestrian access. In many cases, however, the access retained by the local government is too small for adequate parking, and only pedestrian access is possible.

Two of Gautier's proposed waterfront access sites are a result of "street-ends." Dolphin Avenue and de la Point Street afford access to the waterfront in two different ways; both need major improvements.

The private sector has developed a variety of waterfront access points in the form of marinas, boat launches and marine-related services. However, no public piers, beaches or waterfront-type facilities exist. Currently, there is a demand for new and improved waterfront access in several areas of the city. This has been indicated by various studies conducted over the years by Jackson County, the Bureau of Marine Resources and the state.

### EXISTING WATERFRONT ACCESS

#### Public

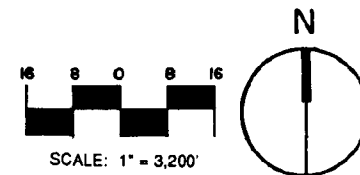
- \* Shepard State Park Boat Launch
- \* Dolphin Avenue Boat Launch
- \* de la Pointe "Bridge-end"

#### Private

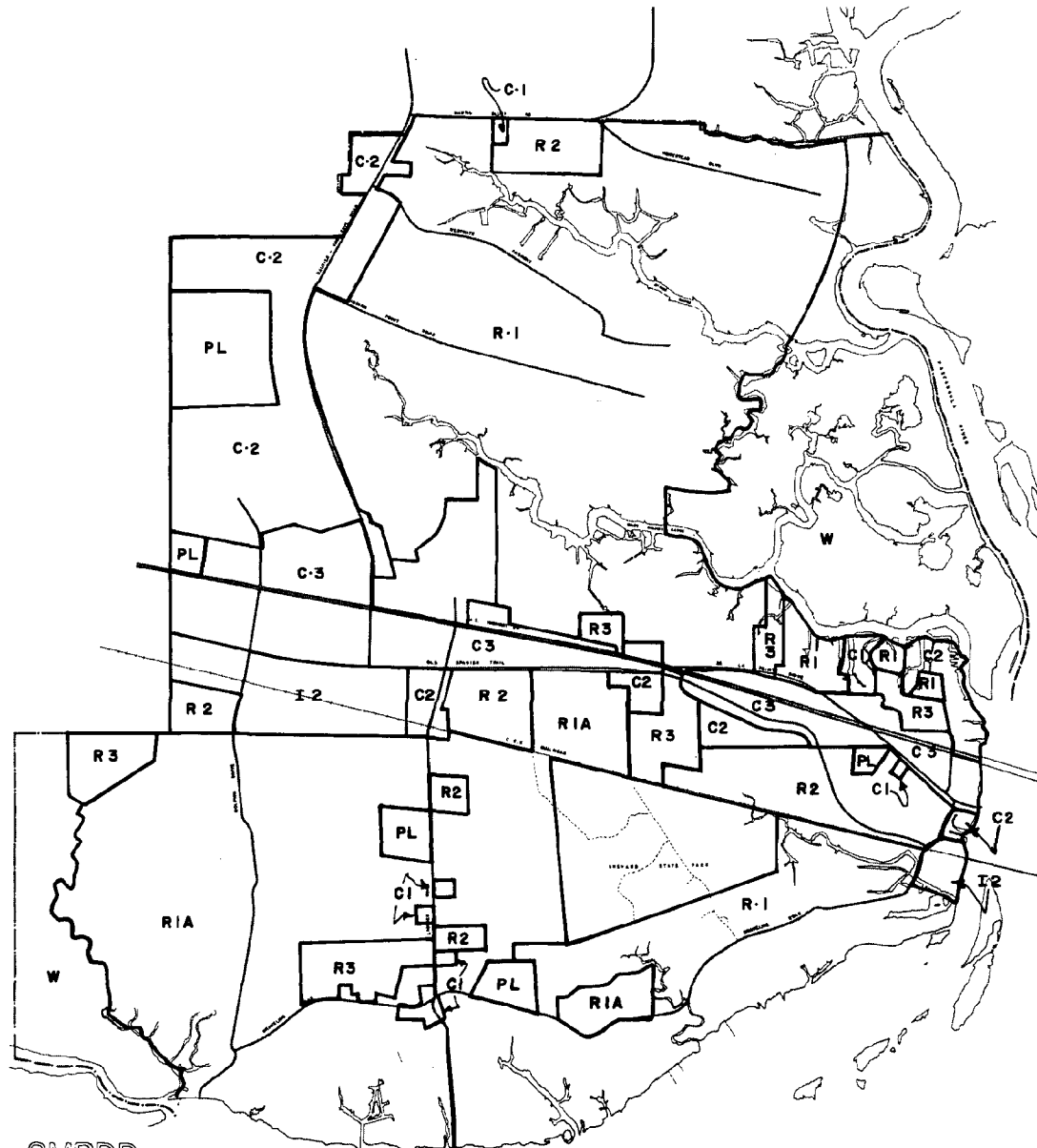
- \* West River Marina
- \* Huck's Fish Camp
- \* Tucei's Fish Camp
- \* Gautier Marina
- \* Mary Walker Marina
- \* Indian Point Marina
- \* Sioux Bayou Fish Camp

# ZONING MAP

- R-1 Single-Family Residential District
- R-1A Single-Family Residential District
- R-2 Multi-Family Residential District
- R-3 High Density Residential District
- I-1 Planned Industrial Park District
- I-2 Light Industrial District
- W Wetlands District
- PL Public Lands District
- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District
- C-2 Community Commercial District
- C-3 Highway Commercial District



**CITY OF  
GAUTIER**



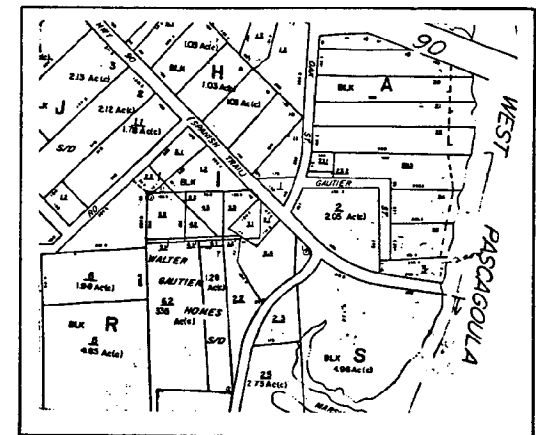
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## LAND USE & ZONING

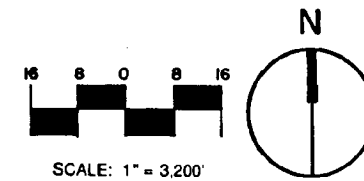
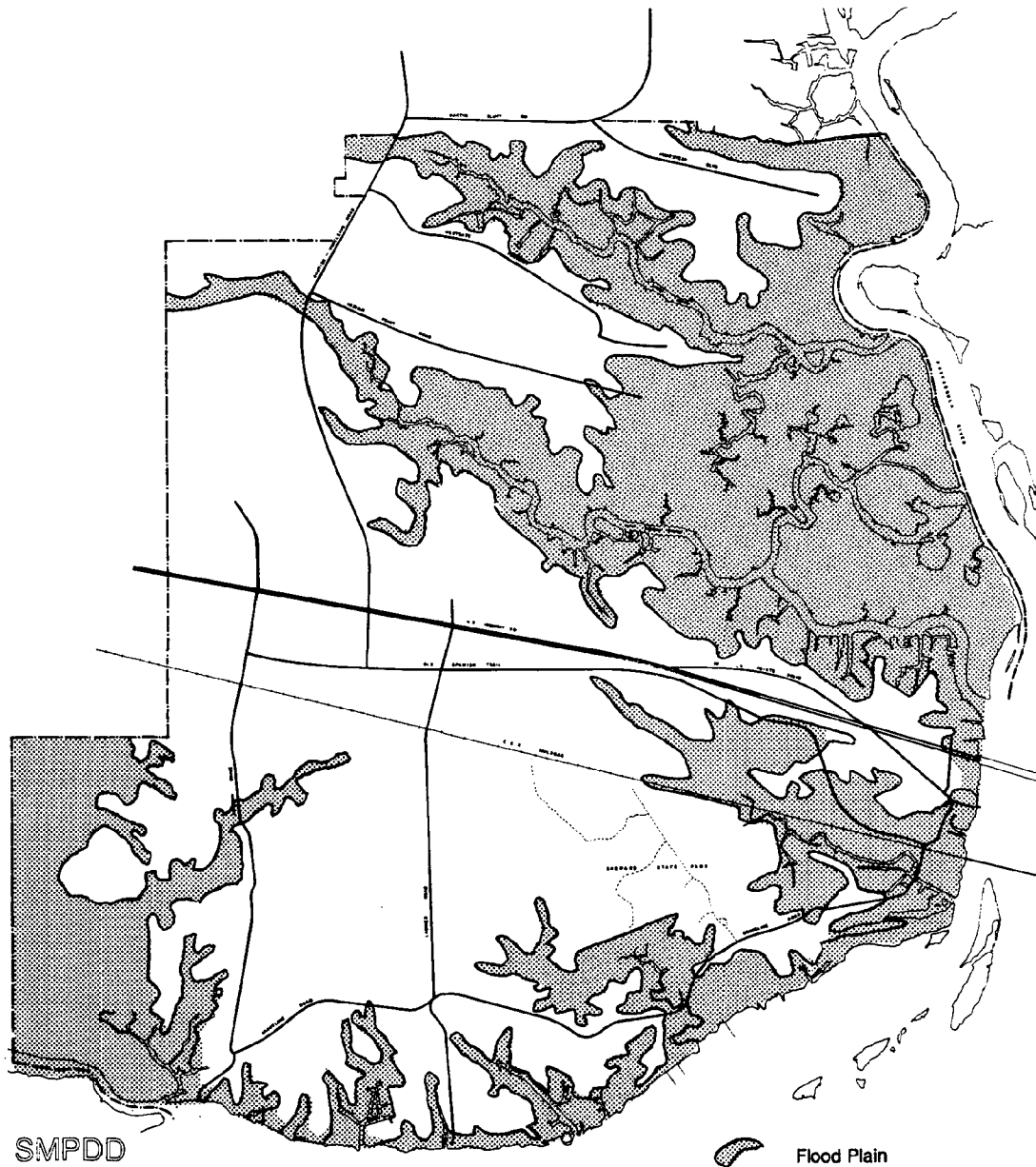
A review of the property reappraisal maps for Gautier indicates that there are a total of 427 parcels abutting Mary Walker and Sioux Bayous, the West Pascagoula River, and the Mississippi Sound. Thirty-one parcels are zoned commercial, 2 are light industrial and most of the remaining 394 parcels are zoned residential. Several large tracts of land are zoned in a wetlands district and are not recommended for use or access. (See map.)

The preponderance of residentially zoned property is a result of Gautier's historical character of summer homes, fishing camps, and peaceful retreats. Secondly, the growth of shipbuilding activity at Ingalls beginning in the late 1960s through the 1980s stimulated major growth along much of Gautier's shoreline and adjacent upland areas. As a result of the residential expansion, few parcels were set aside for public access through the construction of boat launches, fishing piers or water parks. As has happened in many waterfront communities, the acquisition of property may be required in order to meet the increasing demand for shoreline access.

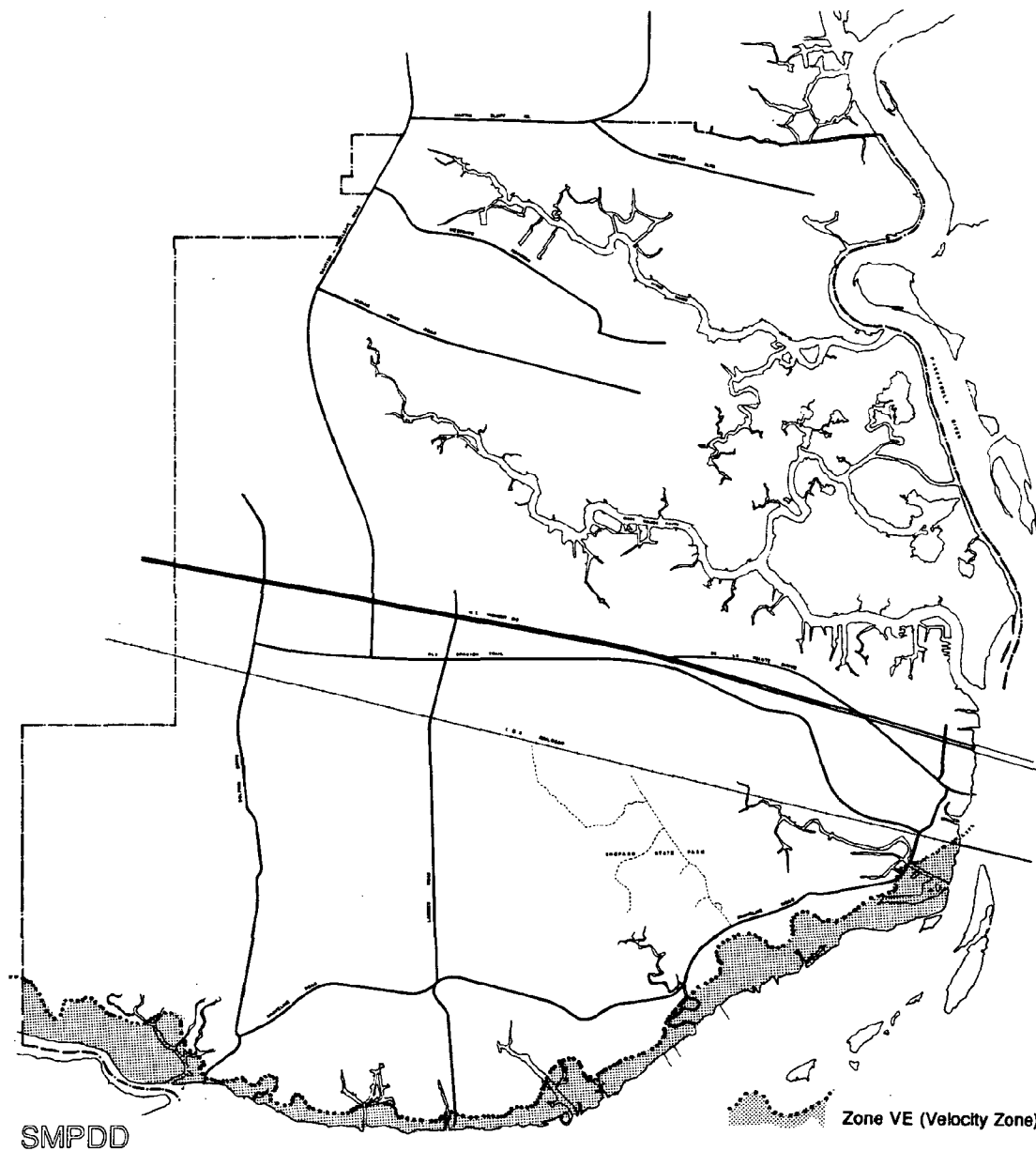
In Gautier's case, several opportunities exist to establish attractive and functional points of access through cooperative efforts with existing property owners that should have no negative effect upon the surrounding area.



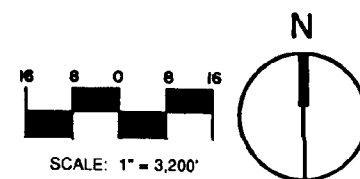
# FLOOD PLAIN MAP



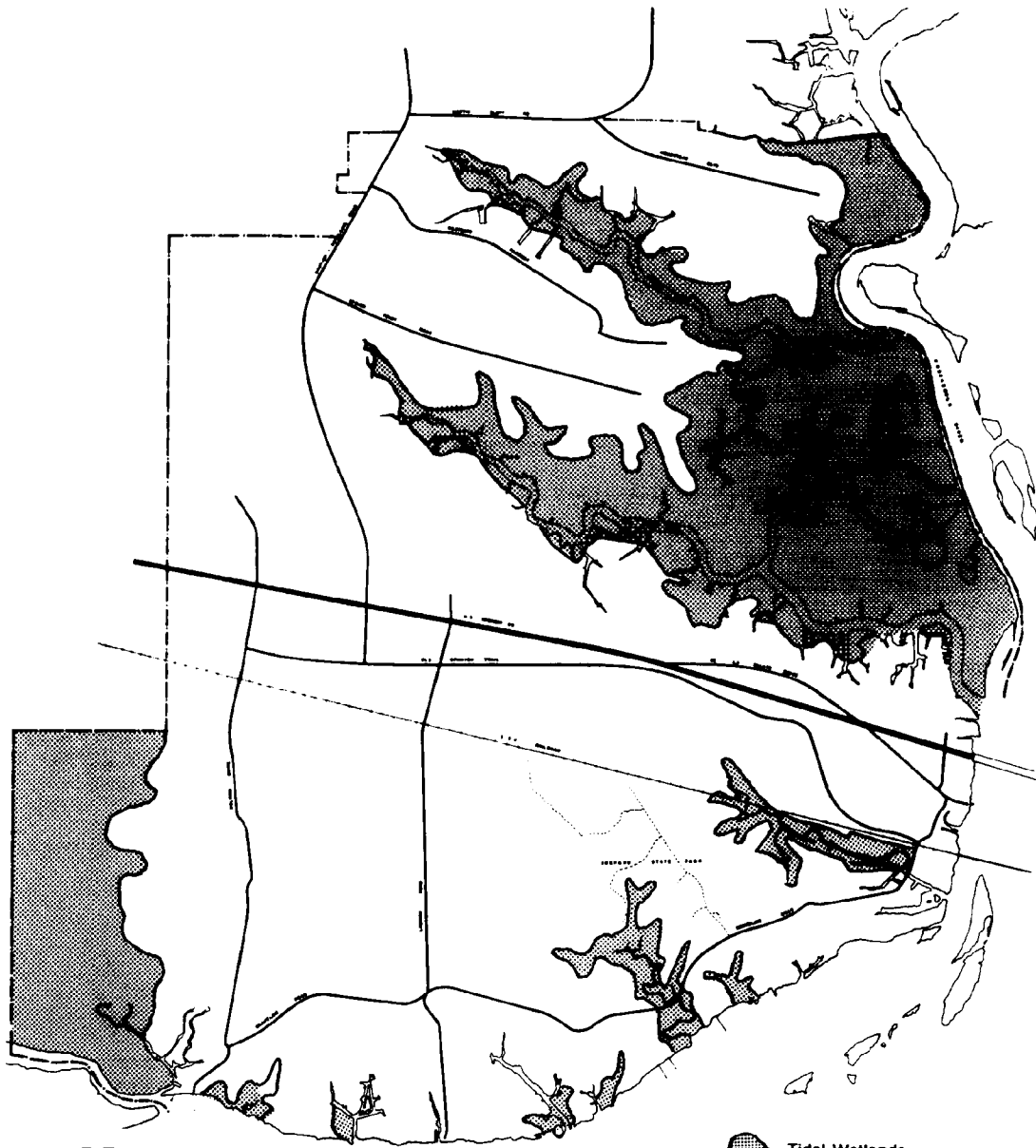
**CITY OF**  
**GAUTIER**



**VELOCITY ZONE  
MAP  
(Storm Surge)**



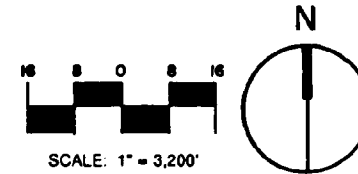
**CITY OF  
GAUTIER**



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 Tidal Wetlands

# TIDAL WETLANDS MAP



## CITY OF GAUTIER

## TIDELANDS

Mississippians have bought, sold, traded and leased land along the coastline for almost three centuries with little concern about whether the tide's ebb and flow had an impact on land titles. The **Cinque Bambini** court case began to get the attention of coastal land owners in 1986 when the Mississippi Supreme Court ruled that lands influenced by the tide were owned by the state. This ruling was based on an obscure provision of the state's 1817 charter creating a Public Tidelands Trust, which named Mississippi's citizens as beneficiaries, and the state as trustee. **Cinque Bambini** was upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court in the 1988 **Phillips Petroleum** case.

Coastal land owners became more concerned in 1988 when Mississippi's Secretary of State established a blue-ribbon commission to set up guidelines for the use and lease of Public Trust Tidelands. A major question to be resolved concerns the boundaries of the tidelands. Who knows with any certainty where the line between tidally-affected lands and uplands was in 1817? And, who knows how an 1817 boundary affect current ownership?

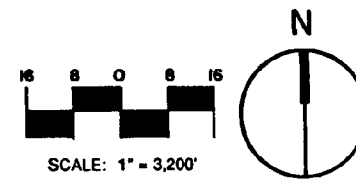
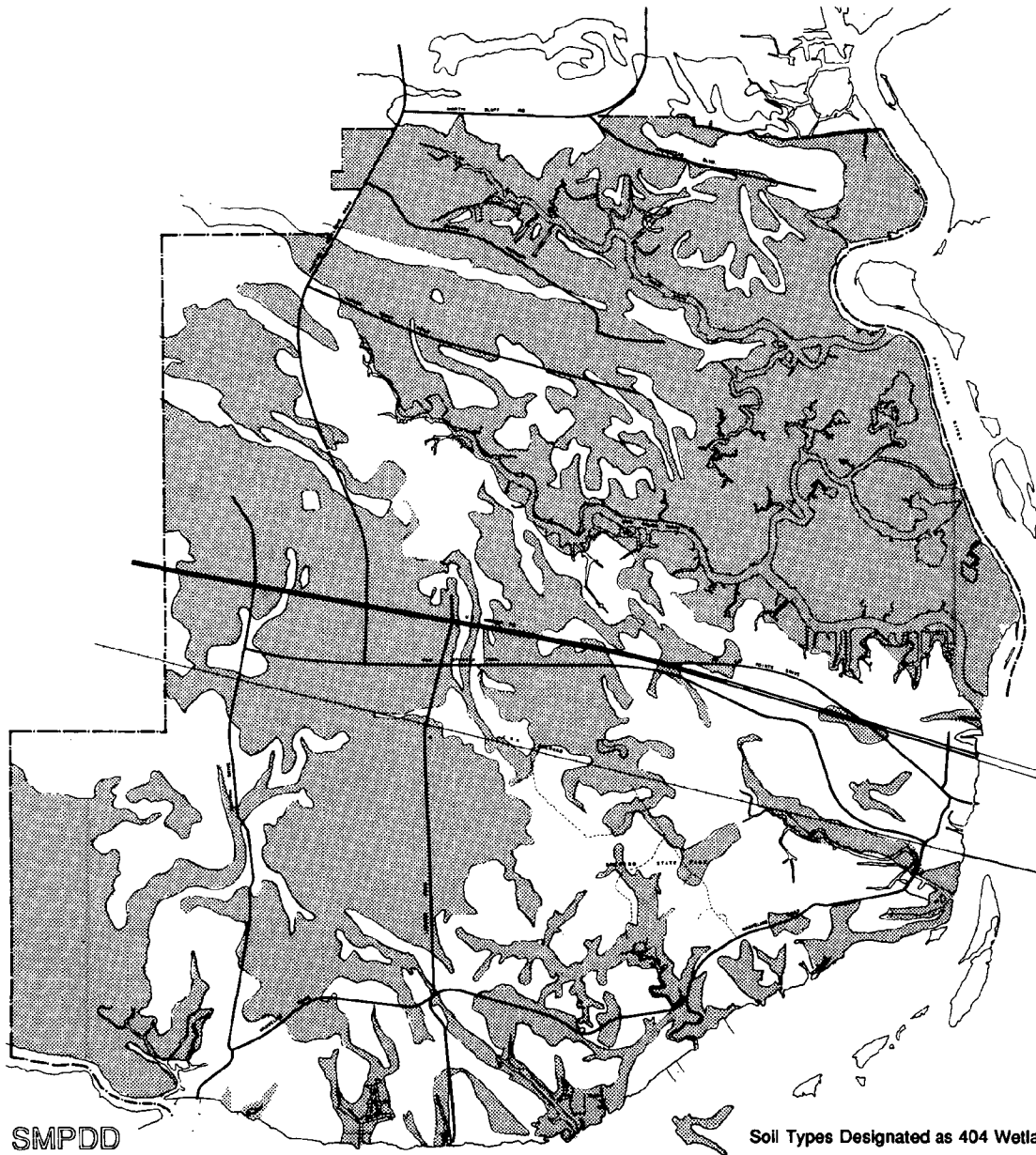
The state legislature tried to resolve the boundary problem in 1989 when it passed a law that would require the use of information and aerial photography prepared for 1973 wetlands legislation as a basis for tidelands boundaries. The Secretary of State, however, did not find this legislative compromise acceptable and filed suit, challenging the new law's constitutionality. Many observers believe that boundaries drawn with the 1973 data would significantly reduce the amount of lands considered to be within the state's tidelands jurisdiction, thereby greatly reducing potential lease revenues for the state.

Until this legal debate is resolved, virtually no private development can take place on any tidally-affected property without a lease from the Secretary of State. Financing and title insurance can be difficult to obtain. Governmental projects, however, can proceed in tideland areas if the Secretary of State's office can be convinced that these projects are for a public purpose and conform with the state's tidelands guidelines.





# 404 WETLANDS MAP



**CITY OF  
GAUTIER**

## UPLAND WETLANDS

The United States Army Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Soil Conservation Service have issued new, joint regulations outlining the criteria by which a determination can be made regarding the designation of property as "404 Wetlands". The "404 Wetlands" are not influenced by the tides as are tidelands, but carry many of the same developmental and use restrictions and regulations that tidal wetland areas do. This recent action by the federal agencies could result in the loss of possibly hundreds of previously developable acres of property in Gautier alone.

Based upon the new regulations, if a particular piece of property displays any two of the following characteristics, then a 404 Permit and certain mitigation measures may be required before any developmental activity can be undertaken:

- \* hydric soils & hydric inclusive soils (soils which hold water)
- \* vegetation considered to be of wetlands variety (5,000 possible types)
- \* temporary presence of water at or near the surface

Few exceptions are in place that would permit the alteration of the property. Exempt projects include:

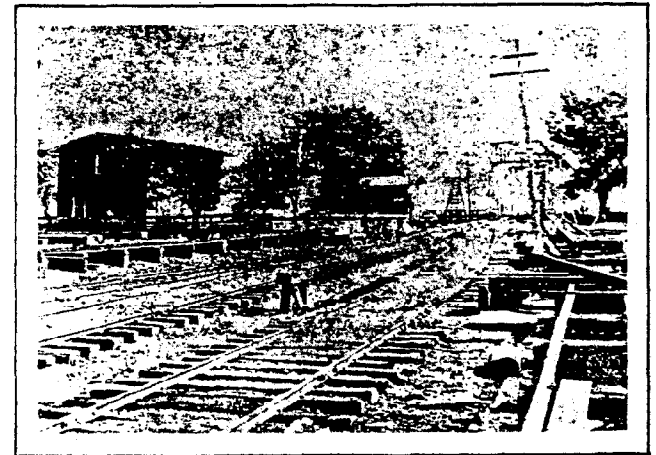
- \* water dependent uses
- \* projects of a public nature
- \* agricultural wetlands converted to crop production prior to December, 1986.

### Hydric Soils

Ad	Alluvial land
Ba	Bayboro silt loam
Cb	Coastal beach
Cx	Coxville silt loam
Gr	Grady soils
Pm	Plummer loamy sand
Pn	Plummer loamy sand, dark surface
Ra	Rains loam, dark surface
Sw	Swamp
Tm	Tidal marsh

### Hydric Inclusive Soils

Pha	Pheba loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes
ScA	Scranton loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes
ScB	Scranton loamy sand, 2 to 5 percent slopes



### III. MARKET

### III. MARKET

- Public Opinion
- Demographics
- Market Assessment
- Assets & Liabilities

## **PUBLIC OPINION**

### **Business Survey -- Profile of Responses**

Surveys were mailed to one hundred and fifty-nine businesses within the City of Gautier. These surveys asked questions about the perception of the business climate in Gautier. Twenty businesses responded to the survey. This provided a response rate of 12.6%. The low response rate only provides an insight into business patterns and should not be relied upon for actual project development purposes. A more in-depth market study should be conducted before any specific business revitalization projects are undertaken.

- \* Approximately two-thirds of the respondents owned their own business. Thirty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they had been in business over fifteen years. Another thirty-one percent of the respondents had been in business between one to four years. Approximately six percent of the responding businesses had been in business under one year. Almost three-quarters of the responding businesses utilized all of their building. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they did business with their customers in person.
- \* Thirty-five percent of the responding businesses felt that their business had improved over the past five years. Another thirty percent of the respondents suggested that their business had stayed the same. Twenty percent of the respondents felt that

#### **Retail and Service Profile**

- \* The Mississippi Employment Security Commission estimated that during fiscal year 1989, a total of 320 Gautier businesses paid sales taxes to the State of Mississippi.
- \* 1989 gross sales for Gautier totaled \$103,777,677.00. Overall, Gautier taxpayers represent about 12.2% of Jackson County's total number of taxpayers.
- \* Gautier's 320 taxpayers accounted for 15.51% of the gross sales in Jackson County in 1989.
- \* Gautier captured sizeable markets in the furniture and fixtures sector.
- \* In 1989, Gautier businesses accounted for 44.98% of all apparel and general merchandise sales within Jackson County, yet only 27.53% of the county's apparel and general merchandise businesses were located within the City of Gautier.
- \* Gautier captured 60% of the sales of recreation and amusement activities.
- \* Approximately 26.67% of the taxpayers were located within Gautier's city limits.
- \* Miscellaneous sales accounted for slightly more than 20% (21.96%) of the county's sales, yet only 13.44% of miscellaneous retail type businesses were located in Gautier.

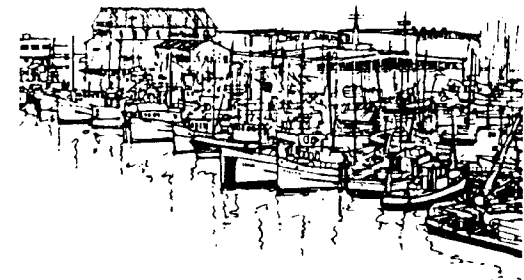
their business had declined and three respondents did not venture an answer to this question.

- \* Approximately sixty percent of the respondents felt that overall, the trend for businesses in Gautier had declined over the past five years. One-quarter of the respondents felt that the trend for businesses in Gautier had stayed the same, and fifteen percent of the responding businesses felt that the business climate had improved in the past five years.
- \* Thirty percent of the responding businesses felt that the overall business trend would stay the same in Gautier during the next five years. One quarter of the respondents felt that the business trend would decline, another quarter of the respondents felt that the business trend would improve. Twenty percent of the respondents did not have an opinion of what the future trends would be.
- \* Thirteen of the respondents suggested that five percent or less of their business was tourist related. Of these thirteen respondents, five indicated that none of their business was tourist related. Two respondents indicated that about 10% of their business was tourist related and one respondent indicated that 20% of his/her business was tourist related.
- \* Fourteen respondents suggested new businesses that they would like to see operating in Gautier. Two businesses indicated that they would like to see a new auto dealer located in Gautier. Three other respondents suggested new high

technology industries which were not government or military related.

- \* Eight businesses responded to a question asking what types of improvements they would like to see. Six respondents felt that utilities could be improved. The responses included more frequent garbage pick up, better schools, lower water bills, and placing street lights throughout the city. Two respondents suggested that waterfront improvements should be made by the recreation department. One respondent suggested better maintenance of Bacot Park and another suggested improving organized activities.
- \* Nine respondents suggested waterfront improvements. Two respondents suggested regular beach clean-ups. Two other respondents suggested less governmental involvement on the waterfront. One of these respondents also suggested maintaining the depths of bayous, canals and channels, specifically the entrance to Graveline Bayou. Other responses include developing a boat launch, building a public pavilion and considering dockside gambling at the Tiki Marina. Another respondent identified the waterfront as Gautier's primary asset and suggested:

*Development should be strictly regulated, our waterfront could be a major drawing card for better residential areas, as well as business. If developed properly, we could enhance our tourism .... Our waterfront is our best asset. Let's make it the best that it can be.*



## **Shoppers Survey**

Thirty-eight responses were gathered for a Shopper's Survey in Gautier. Surveys were placed in thirteen stores in Gautier and the city hall. A drop box was placed next to the box of surveys for responses. The intent of the survey was to determine how often shoppers used Gautier's business establishments. As with the Business Owners Survey, the low response rate of the Shoppers Survey renders the survey results not very reliable, but gives some indication of shopper satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

- \* Sixty-three percent of the respondents to this survey indicated that they lived in Gautier.
- \* Approximately 81.5% felt that it was important to shop in Gautier business establishments.
- \* Approximately 86.8% indicated that they regularly patronized Gautier grocery stores.
- \* 84.2% of the respondents usually used local bank branches.
- \* 81.6% regularly visited Gautier restaurants.
- \* 68.4% of the respondents used local drug stores.
- \* 65.8% regularly visited local clothing and accessory stores.
- \* 63% of the respondents said they regularly patronized Gautier hardware stores.



- \* Overall, Gautier appeared to satisfy consumer needs. However, two activities with which Gautier shoppers indicated that they were not satisfied were visits to professional offices and work activities. Thirty-nine percent of the responding shoppers indicated that they never visited a professional office in Gautier.
- \* Twenty-six percent of the respondents said that they did not work in Gautier.
- \* Finally, Gautier shoppers were asked to identify a landmark, business or building which comes to mind when they think of Gautier. Thirteen people, approximately thirty-nine percent of the responding shoppers, said the mall was the landmark that came to mind when they thought of Gautier. Three people said they thought of City Hall. Two people said they thought of the college and two other people said they thought of Wonderland Park as a Gautier landmark. The Old Plantation, large oak trees, and the Old Gautier Place were thought of by one respondent each as landmarks.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population in Gautier, 1980-1990

1980 .....	10,392
1982 .....	11,075
1984 .....	11,580
1988 .....	11,670
1990* .....	9,884

\* Preliminary Census Figure

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

### Population

The City of Gautier incorporated in 1987. Prior to the City's incorporation, the area was considered a Census Designated Place for administrative purposes. It is assumed that the boundaries of the Census Designated Place were not the same as the legal boundaries of incorporation.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census estimated that Gautier's preliminary 1990 population was 9,884. This figure is slightly lower than the 1980 Census figure of 10,392 people living within the Gautier community and much lower than subsequent two year estimates.

A February 1988 study developed by the Strategic Planning Group, Inc. to determine the impact of the proposed Navy Homeport facility to be located in Pascagoula, estimated that growth in the Gautier area (defined in the Strategic Planning Group's report as census tracts 410, 426 and 84% of census tract 408) accounted for 14% of Jackson County's total growth between 1980 and 1987. Moss Point accounted for 24.0% of the total county growth, Ocean Springs accounted for 22.7% of the county's total growth, and Pascagoula accounted for another 14% of the county's total growth.

## Households

Data from CACI, a private company which specializes in marketing information, suggests that the number of households in the Gautier area grew by 27% between 1980 and 1990. In 1980, CACI estimated that there were approximately 2,760 households in the Gautier area. In 1990, CACI suggested that there were 3,520 households within the Gautier area. CACI also estimated that the size of households in 1990 was smaller than in 1980.

Gautier's smaller household size of 2.9 persons per household is reflective of a national trend. The average size of households is probably influenced by two factors within Gautier, younger households which may not yet have children and older households who no longer have children living at home.

## Age of Population

Data from CACI estimates that 31.9% of Gautier's population is under the age of 13. Corresponding with this figure, CACI estimates that 34.6% of Gautier's population is between the ages of 25 to 44. Only 8.1% of Gautier's population is over the age of 55.

Data segregated into age categories indicated that there was a slightly smaller percentage of Gautier residents over age 55 in 1990 than in 1980. CACI statistics also indicate a growing percentage of area residents who are middle-aged. The percentage of residents aged 35 to 54 grew to approximately one-quarter of Gautier's total population in 1990.

### GAUTIER GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

1990 Population: 9,884

1990 Households: 3,520

Average Household Size: 2.93

31.9% of Gautier's Population is  
Under Age 13

42.77% of Gautier's Population is  
Under Age 20

Only 8.1% of Gautier's Population is  
Over Age 55

Gautier's 1990 Median Household  
Income was \$30,971

Gautier's Median Family Income in  
1990 was \$32,599

Gross Retail Sales in Gautier for  
FY 1989 were \$103,777,677.00

During FY 1989, 320 Businesses  
collected Sales Tax.

**Age in Gautier by Group,  
as a Percent of the  
Total Population of Gautier**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1980</u>
0 - 5	12.9%	13.4%
6 - 13	19.0%	17.2%
14 - 17	6.8%	8.1%
18 - 20	4.0%	4.9%
21 - 24	5.1%	6.9%
25 - 34	18.7%	18.6%
35 - 44	15.9%	13.2%
45 - 54	9.5%	8.7%
55 - 64	4.7%	5.6%
65 and Older	3.4%	3.4%

Source: CACI, Arlington, VA.  
Obtained through  
Mississippi Power  
Company, September,  
1990.

When compared to Jackson County, the City of Gautier has a much younger population. About one-quarter of Jackson County's total population is under age 13. Approximately 37.5% of the total population in Jackson County is under age 20 and fully 14% of Jackson County's population is over age 55.

The Gautier area appears to be a family oriented community. Almost one-third of the community's population is under age 13, and slightly more than one-third of the population is between the ages 25 to 44.

### **Income**

The median household income within the Gautier area in 1990 was estimated by CACI to be \$30,971. The median family income was slightly higher. The median family income in Gautier for 1990 was estimated to be \$32,599. Both the median family income and the median household income grew by over 65% between 1980 and 1990. The median family income grew by 66.5% and the median household income grew by 67.5% between 1980 and 1990.

## MARKET ASSESSMENT

### Commercial Locations/Business Clusters

- \* Gautier's retail and commercial activities are located primarily on U.S. Highway 90 with the highest concentration of activity centered near Singing River Mall.
- \* Gautier-Vancleave Road and Ladnier Road are locations for more commercial activities.
- \* Several small businesses and offices are located on De La Pointe Drive. De La Point Drive offers a unique, local commercial and service oriented area of independent stores and shops. These activities are specialty-related, generally destination points of consumers. The traffic generators in Gautier are located in or near the Singing River Mall. Smaller specialty repair shops and marine related industries are located throughout the rest of the city.
- \* The Singing River Mall was built in Gautier in 1980. The site provided excellent highway access, plenty of space for parking and for buildings, and the site offered shopping in a convenient location between Pascagoula and Ocean Springs. Subsequent commercial growth occurred around the mall. Much of the growth directly adjacent to the mall is franchise related.
- \* Locally-owned businesses appear to fan out from the Singing River Mall into smaller strip center developments.

### JACKSON COUNTY (PASCAGOULA MSA) TRADE AREA STATISTICS

1990 Population: 113,221  
(Preliminary Census Count)

1988 Population: 128,100 (Census  
Estimate)

1988 Households: 43,690

Average Household Size: 2.93

25.5% of Jackson County's  
Population is Under Age 13

37.5% of Jackson County's  
Population is Under Age 20

14.1% of Jackson County's  
Population is Over Age 55

- \* The Mary Walker Bayou area is an interesting mix of commercial activity, particularly of a marine related variety, and residential development. The slow and continuous evolution of the land use in this area has developed in such a way that the normal conflicts between residential uses and commercial uses do not seem to exist. In fact, the mix seems to make the area attractive because of the quaintness of the residential area, the beauty and scenic quality provided by the Mary Walker Bayou and the Pascagoula River and the marine related activity it supports. Numerous small fish camps, both public and private boat launches, marinas for large, as well as small watercraft, marine sales, repair and outfitting, restaurant and entertainment establishments have all combined to create a unique setting.

There were several notable clusters of businesses within Gautier. Other than Singing River Mall, the most specialized cluster to appear was a marine or marine oriented cluster. These businesses were related to the water and location was the primary reason why they were located within the city. A list of marine related businesses located in Gautier follows.

### **Marine Related Commercial Activities**

Sea Market Inc.	5116 Gautier-Vancleave Rd	Seafood retail
Seaspace Dive Center	3308 Sutter Rd	Scuba instruction
Gautier Marina & Hardware Supply	704 Sandstone	Marine supply
L & E Marine and Repair	309 Graveline Rd	Boat repair
Mary Walker Fishing Camp and Marina	3310 Mary Walker Drive	Marina
Navigation Service Co.	4341 Gautier-Vancleave Rd	Marine Services
Old Oak Marina & Campgrounds	1105 Stanfield Point Rd	Marina/Camping
Ray's Propeller Shop	704 Sandstone St	Marine supply
Sportsman Marine	Highway 90 East	Marine Supply
Tucei's Fishing Camp	3300 Oak St	Marina
West River Marina	217 Graveline Rd	Marina

## **Market Assessment -- Basic Conclusions**

- \* There is no distinguishable downtown or attributable retail activity outside of the Singing River Mall and the dispersed commercial strip centers.
- \* There is a need to create a central market place and then advertise and educate the public about its importance.
- \* Any creation of "downtown" or specialty shops cannot compete with Singing River Mall. This would be counterproductive to merchants in both places.
- \* The merchants should seek to establish complimentary retail niches or cater to another market entirely that the Mall can not serve.
- \* Marine orientation does make sense, both with working marine repair and with marine oriented service and retail. If marine oriented service and retail works, then mix in restaurants and more consumer oriented water shops, i.e. shops for bathing suits, diving equipment, fishing tackle, a watercolor gallery of sea scenes, etc.
- \* New commercial/retail development should be evolutionary. The market should be tested before it is entered. Destination points should be developed revolving around a marine related theme.



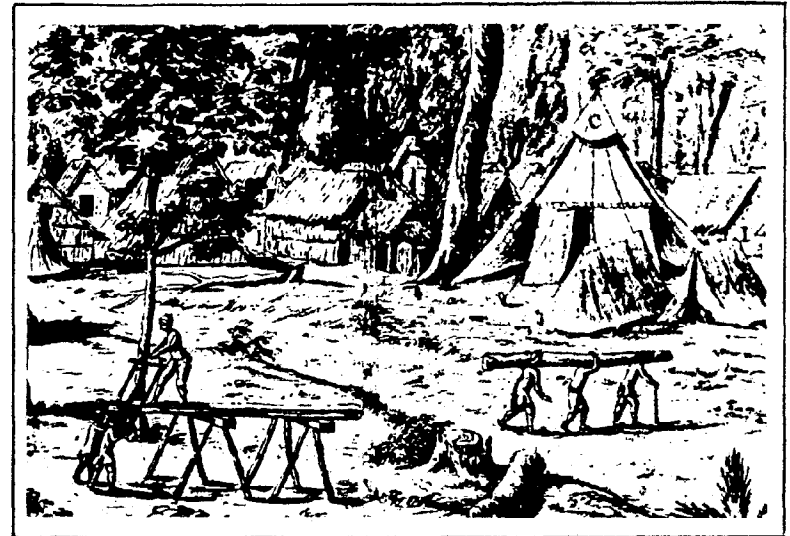
## Gautier Waterfront

### ASSETS:

- + Established reputation as a prolific salt and freshwater fishing center
- + Rich historical background
- + Singing River Mall as an established regional marketplace
- + Underdeveloped prime waterfront/cultural/commercial areas
- + Shepard State Park
- + Reasonably close proximity to the larger market areas of New Orleans, Mobile/Pensacola
- + Adequate transportation access
- + Part of Mississippi Gulf Coast Tourism Trade Area

### LIABILITIES:

- Lack of marketable image
- Limited waterfront access
- Limited availability of developable waterfront property
- Limited local capital resources for economic development
- Lack of defined commercial areas

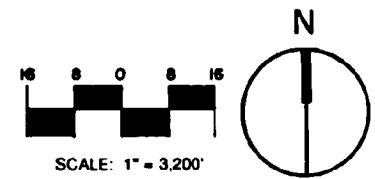
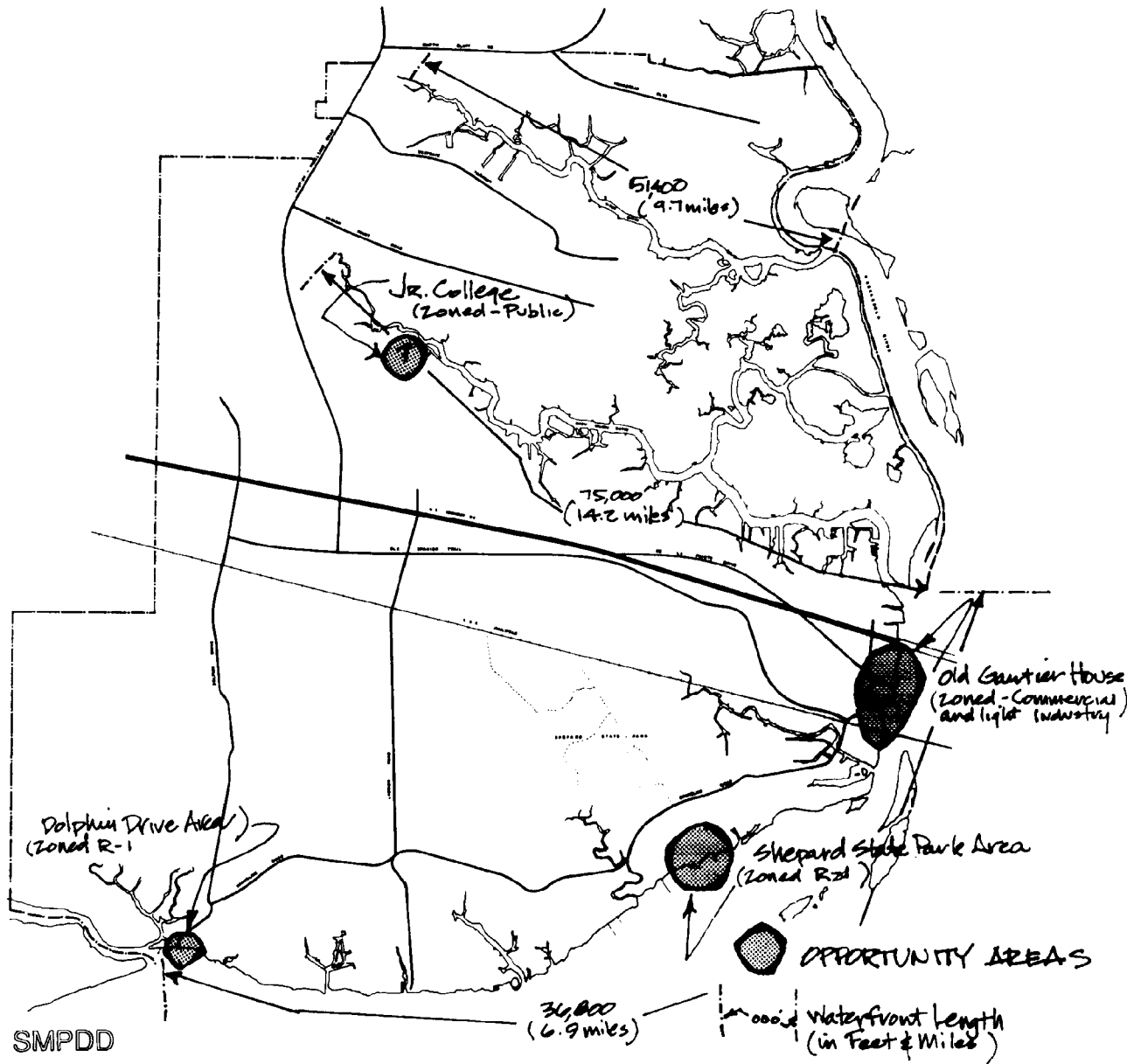


#### IV. OPPORTUNITIES & OPTIONS

#### IV. OPPORTUNITIES & OPTIONS

- Shorefront Opportunity Areas
- Commercial Redevelopment Options
- Coastal Land Use Considerations
- Summary: Recommendations

# OPPORTUNITY AREAS



## CITY OF GAHTIER

**Emerging  
Concepts/Opportunities**

- o Graveline Bayou Boat Launch/Pier
- o Shepard State Park Waterfront Access
- o Gautier "Old Place" Historic Properties (West Pascagoula River)
- o Existing "Fishing Camp" Enclave (Lower Mary Walker Bayou)
- o Community College Public Access/Recreation Area (Upper Mary Walker Bayou)

## **SHOREFRONT OPTIONS & OPPORTUNITY AREAS**

Based on the information generated in the preceding sections, five major shorefront access/development options have been identified by the planning team. They are:

- A. **Graveline Bayou Boat Launch/Pier (located at the terminus of Dolphin Ave.)** - Redevelopment of this existing unimproved ramp to afford small boat access, and construction of a fishing pier are recommended.
- B. **Shepard State Park/Gulfside Expansion** - This project would require a long-term phased approach upon completion of the major improvements contained in the Shepard State Park Development Master Plan. A secondary effort to acquire new acreage south of the state park's entrance between Graveline Road and the Mississippi Sound should be initiated. Due to the undisturbed natural state of the large tract of land, intrusion and alteration of this land should be minimized. Improvements and access would center around a pier extending into the Sound, a wetlands/nature trail with interpretive signage highlighting the flora and fauna of the marshland environment, an open space area, small pavilion for gatherings and limited parking. The development of a Sound-side access point would help attract tourists and meet recreational needs in the city.
- C. **West Pascagoula Waterfront Development Project** - This project incorporates the area generally bounded by the US Highway 90 Bridge north of the CSX Railroad Bridge on the South. This concept represents the most ambitious of the five access projects. The concept is anchored by three primary attributes:
  - \* the historic value of the "Old Place" as the original settlement owned by the Gautier family, descendants of the City's founding father, Fernando Upton Gautier;

- \* two undeveloped commercial tracts of land south of the Gautier property; and,
- \* an existing marina and boat launching facility currently in business.

The combination of historical value, beautiful grounds, undeveloped prime commercial property, riverside access and view, and an existing marina facility could all be woven into an attractive waterfront project that will meet both recreational access, and commercial/retail market niches. Specific business opportunities or types should be considered directly compete with established areas (especially Singing River Mall) but would complement an urban waterfront retail development plan. Restaurants, up-scale "specialty retail", arts and crafts, professional offices and entertainment type businesses are a few of the economic activities that could be encouraged.

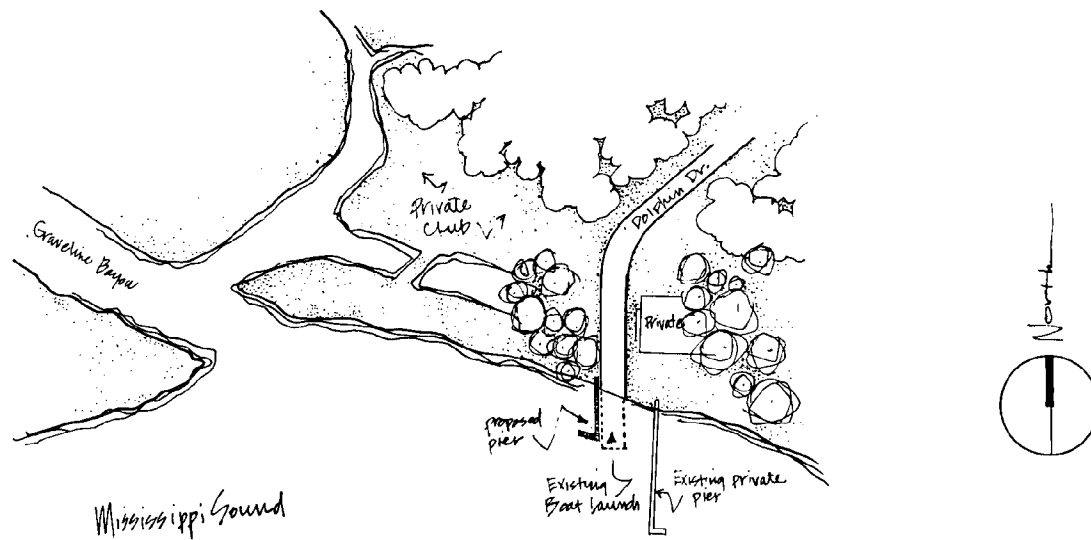
Also worth consideration within the overall area would be the expansion of marine-related services and sales, including dry boat storage and the possibility of a small boat marina. The feasibility of dock-side gambling within the development plan has not been considered, but should be investigated if riverfront areas are added to the state's authorizing legislation.

Recommended design themes begin with an emphasis on open space, enhancing the view of the river and the use of vernacular architecture, especially of architectural styles prevalent in the early 1900s. This would, in effect, recreate an early settlement along the Pascagoula River, particularly in the northern section of the project area. Historic design themes would be incorporated throughout the project area but would become more "modern" or current as the project moves into the retail and the marine related sectors of the project area.



The approach to the development of this project will require the establishment of a highly coordinated public/private partnership encouraging private projects and entailing basic public infrastructure (roadway/parking, lighting, waterside access, utilities, and other improvements) common to economic development projects of this sort. Design standards and zoning/land-use requirements, through the use of a "historic overlay district" may also prove useful to ensure consistency in development throughout the entire project area. The result would be to create an attractive, publicly accessible commercial area that is economically viable and a focal point for community activity.

- D. **Mary Walker Bayou - Redevelopment Area** - Expansion of the successful "fishing camp" based economy of the Mary Walker Bayou area should be encouraged. Currently, considerable undeveloped property exists that could be oriented to capitalize on Gautier's reputation as a great fresh/saltwater fishing area. There is limited opportunity for publicly supported waterfront access due to the well established private sector investment. (Public sector involvement should be of an "incentive" nature.)
- E. **Upper Mary Walker Bayou Recreation Area** - As a joint project between the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College/Jackson County Campus, the City of Gautier and Jackson County, the development of a small water access recreation area has great potential and is recommended. It was determined in discussions with community college officials that a mutually beneficial project of this nature would meet water access needs for the college's future marine-related training program and the city's need for a freshwater recreation area. A small boat ramp, open space, pavilion and a bayou-side boardwalk/pier for fishing could serve general public needs as well as support for community college classes and activities.

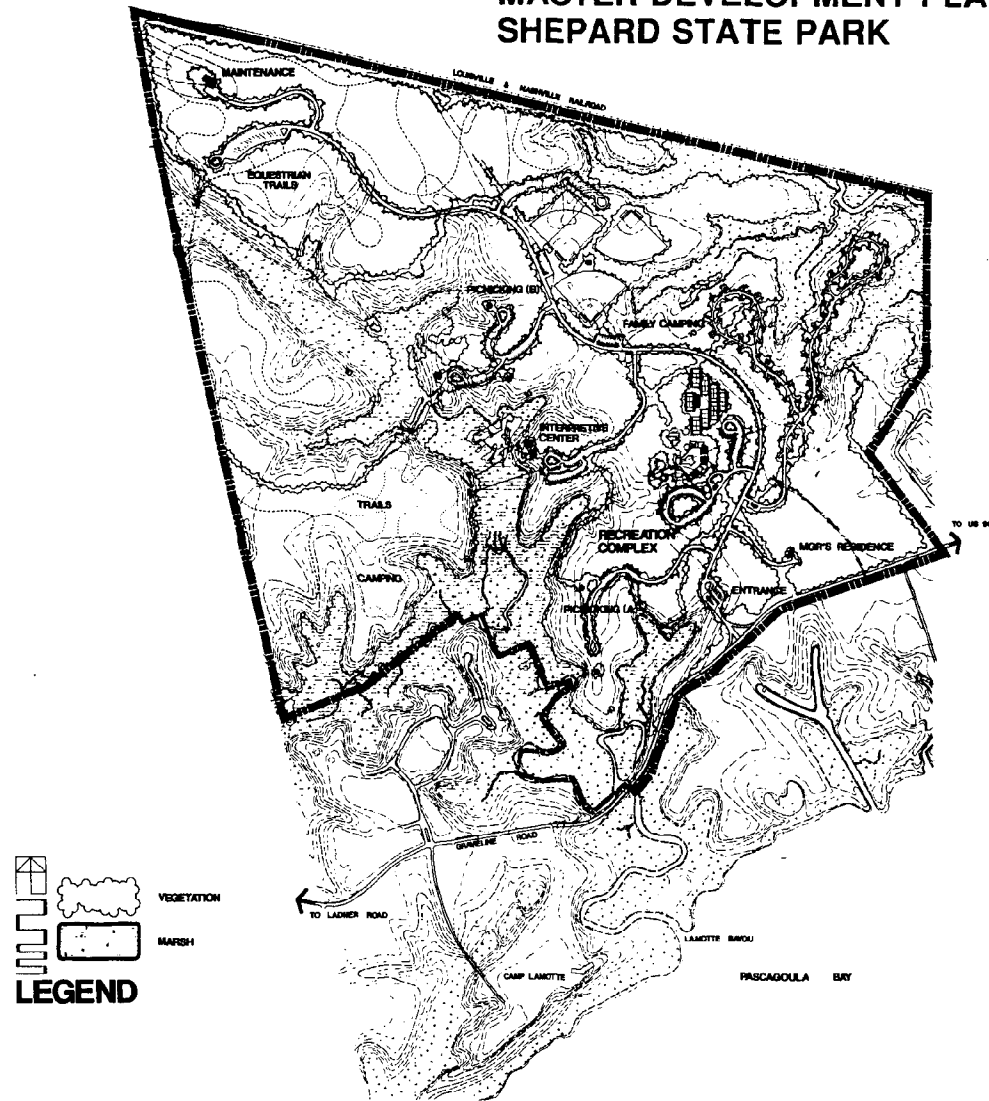


## Graveline Bayou Boat Launch and Pier

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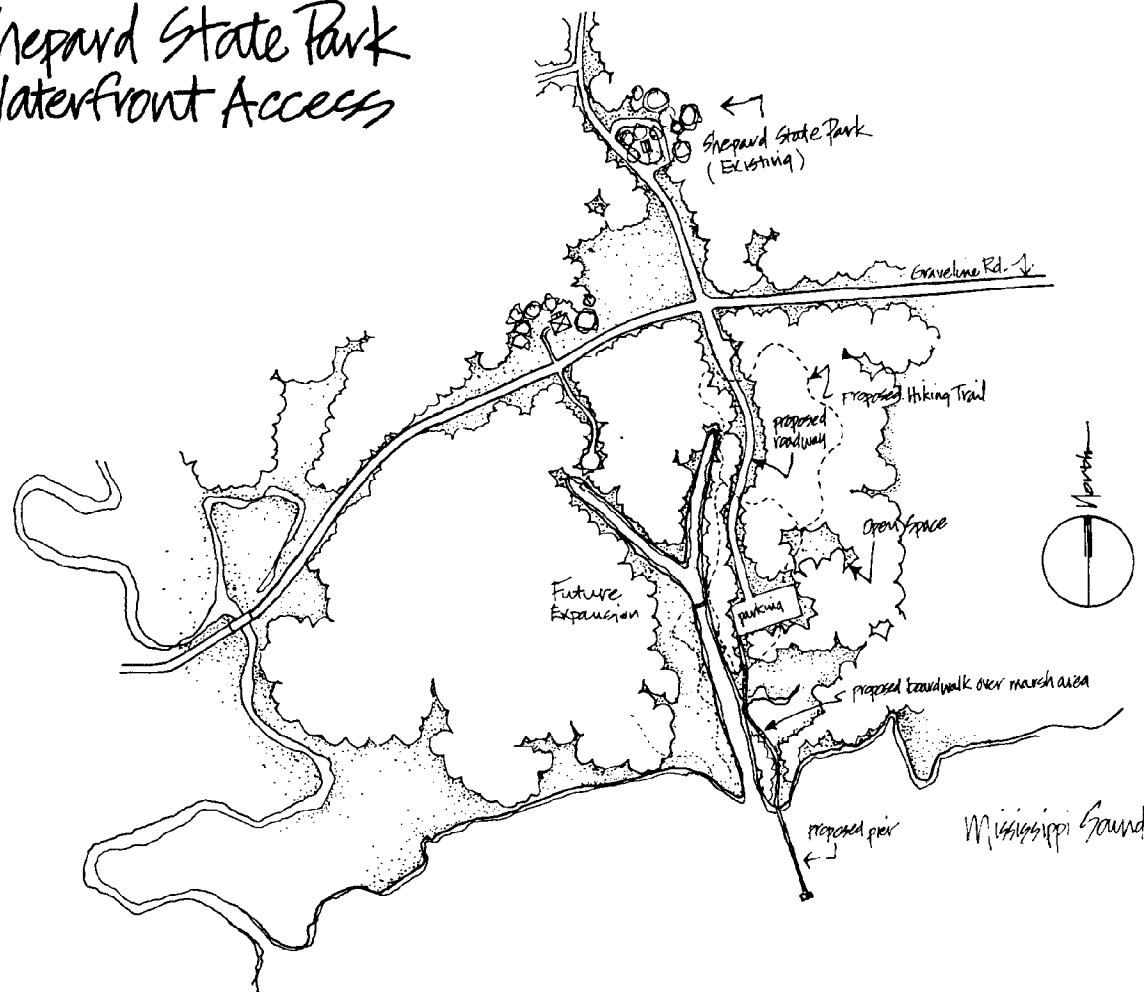


# MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN SHEPARD STATE PARK

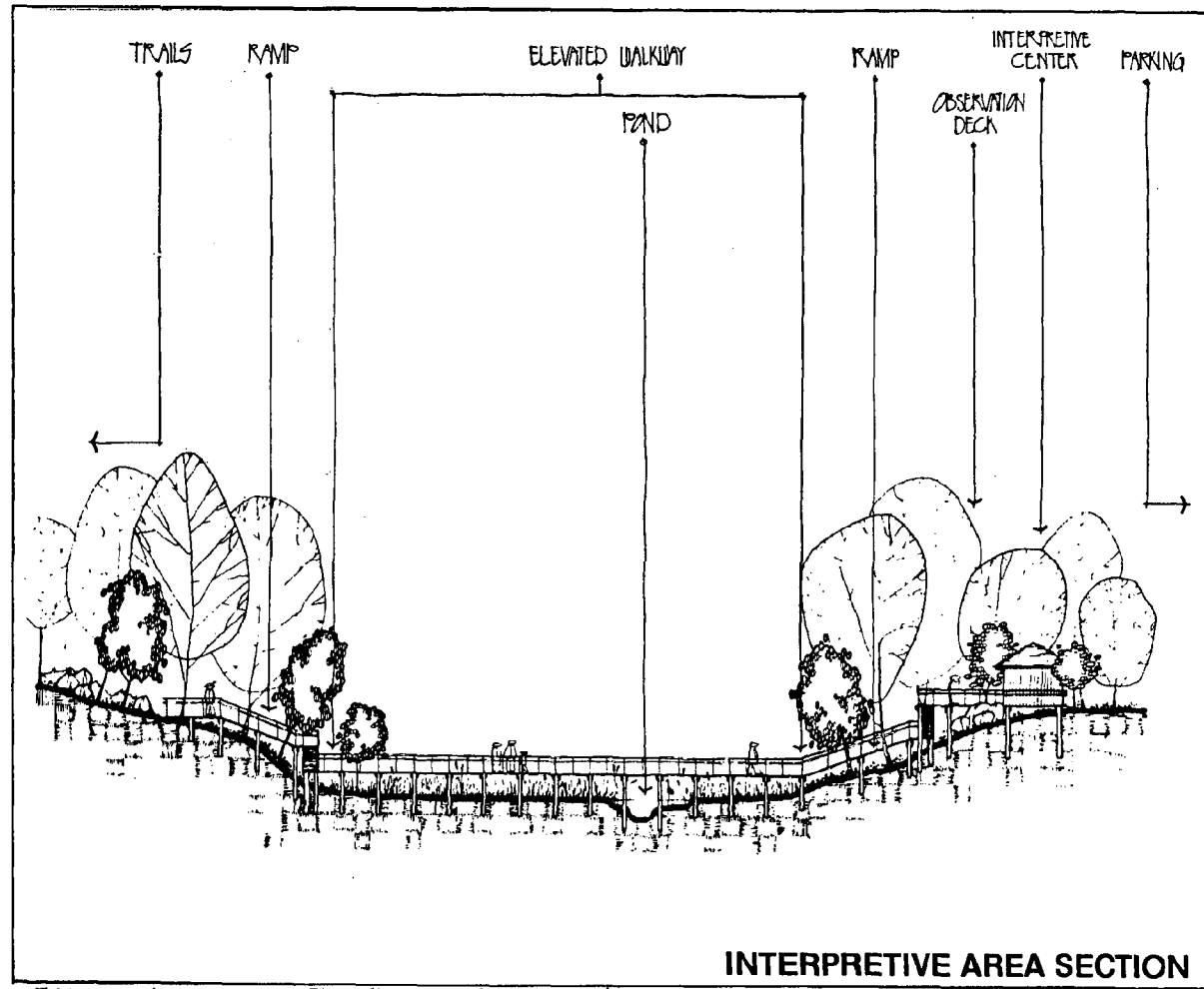


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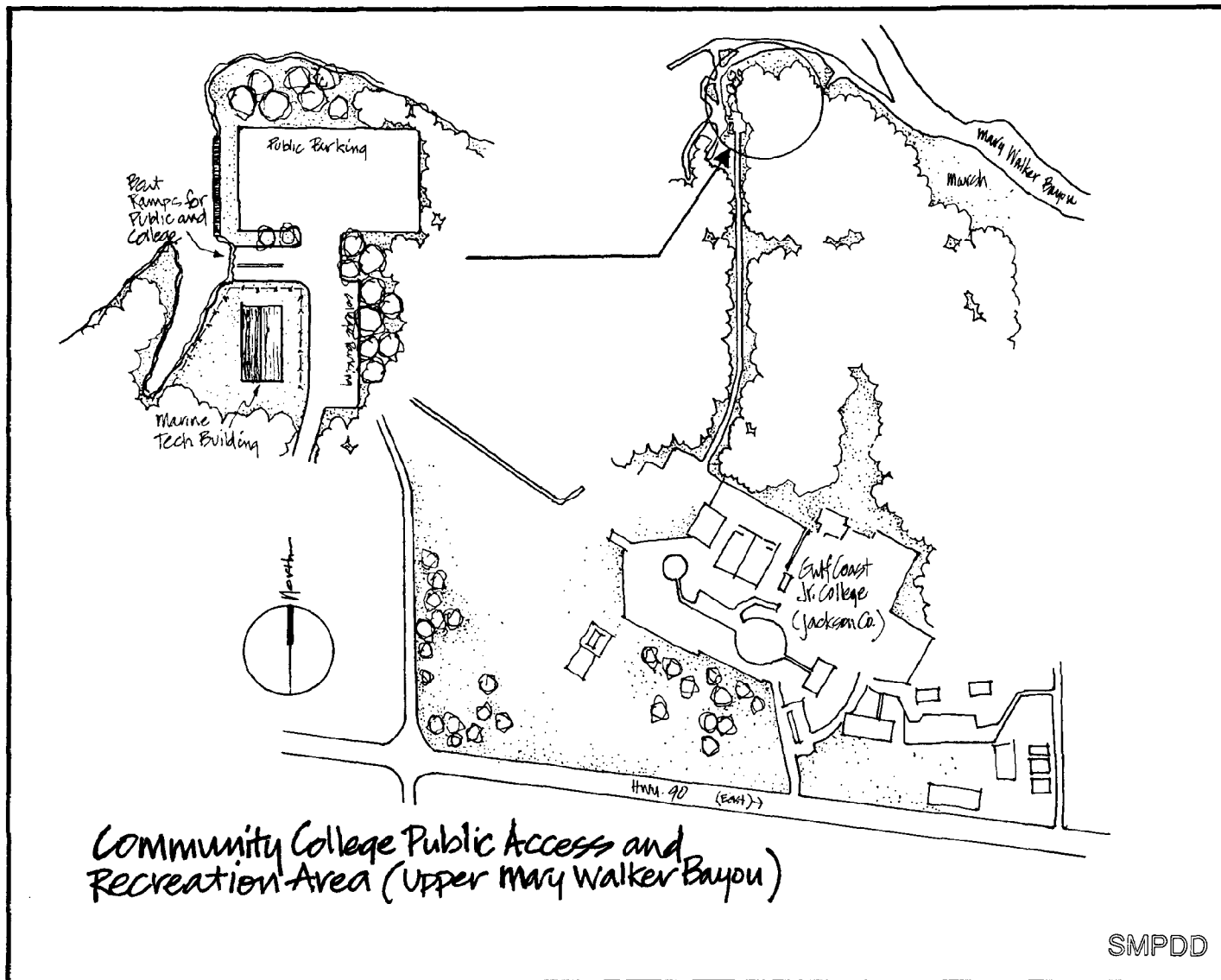
# Shepard State Park Waterfront Access

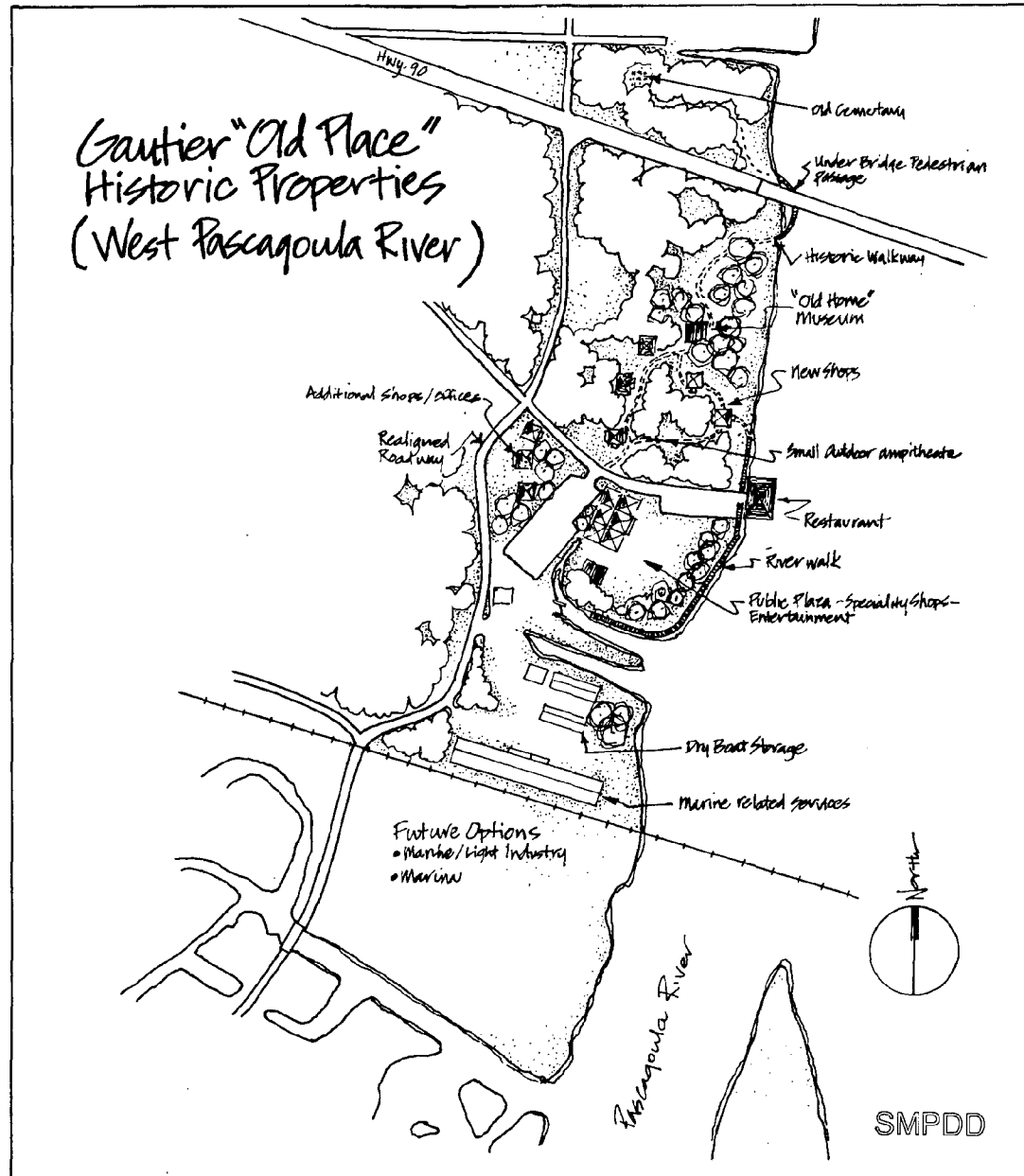


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FROM: Master Development Plan/Shepard Park - Associated Planning Group/Canton, MS.





## COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

### Approaches - used Individually or in Combination:

1. **Historic District** - federal, state or local designation; design standards for structural restorations; zoning for uses; sign/landscaping requirements; examples: New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola, Ocean Springs, Biloxi, Meridian, Hattiesburg.
2. **Structural Relocation** - removal and relocation of architecturally significant buildings from other areas to the target area; examples: Pensacola's Seville Square, Biloxi's Town Green.
3. **Structural Replication** - new buildings are built on vacant sites according to strict design guidelines, resembling the area's vernacular architecture; examples: New Orleans' Vieux Carre, Downtown Charleston.
4. **Thematic Development** - target area is redeveloped along a central historic, cultural or economic theme; conceptual examples: seaport/fishermen's village, French or Spanish settlement, entertainment complex, museum enclave, etc.
5. **Mixed Uses** - combination of major urban land uses: commercial, residential, public and light industrial; adds diversity, security, uniqueness, traffic volume, "agglomeration effect"; examples: most of the above.
6. **Public Improvement Programs** - providing the required public amenities to attract business investment and visitors: transportation access, convenient parking, utilities, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, common signage and graphics, security and special events/cultural programming.

### Commercial Development -- Critical Elements:

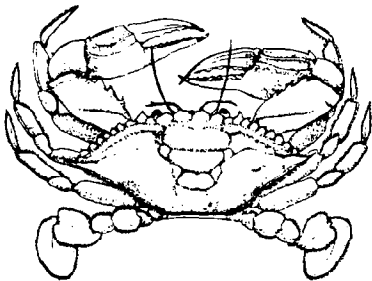
- o Venture/Seed Capital
- o Public Improvements/Common Amenities
- o Day-time and Night-time Use
- o Proper Mix of Goods and Services
- o Market Demand
- o Private Investment
- o Access/Convenience
- o Equitable Tax Policies
- o Adequate Parking



7. **"Main Street" Four Point Program** - Design: visual attractions; Organization: consensus and cooperation; Promotion: marketing of assets and opportunities; and, Economics: economic base expansion/diversification.

#### **Commercial Development Financing/Investment Tools:**

1. **Tax Increment Financing** - pledging future taxes of the target area to retire bonds.
2. **Tax Abatements/Incentives** - tax (and utility) payment credits.
3. **Tax Exempt Revenue Bonds** - through a non-profit development corporation.
4. **General Obligation/"Moral" Obligation Bonds** - city tax pledge/backup.
5. **Federal/State Grants and Loans** - CDBG, EDA, MDECD, others?
6. **Special Assessment** - benefitting properties are taxed for improvements.
7. **Public Acquisition/Developer Proposals** - Developers bid on public sites.
8. **Lease Concessions** - incentives to developers with public leases.
9. **Public Financing** - common (public) area improvements.



## COASTAL LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

It is helpful to identify some special considerations for certain types of coastal land uses. These locational and site requirements are peculiar to water-dependent land uses, and must be factored into planning for coastal areas.

The expansion and development of harbors and marinas need to be provided for. Ports and harbors will continue to provide the transportation infrastructure for many industrial processes. Commercial docks and loading facilities are the backbone of fisheries. As leisure activities increase, so does recreational boating. As waterfront land becomes scarce and coastlines are publicly safeguarded by the reduction of individual, fragmented dock space, convenient, well-served, accessible, marinas need to be provided.

Similarly, we need to ensure improved public access and cost effective development of such recreational facilities as boatramps, community piers, fishing areas and waterfront parks. In many cases, these may be the highest and best uses for potential areas with hazards such as coastal erosion and projected sea level rise.

A sensitivity to the potential sea rise dilemma and coastal erosion concerns must be established as new landside public facilities are developed. New upland infrastructure must be located in floodproof areas, and should not create flood or erosion hazards downstream. Submersible sewage treatment plants, floating highways or drainage systems that don't drain well aren't wise uses of tax dollars. This consideration applies also to water wells

### LESSONS LEARNED -- WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Many areas of the country have undertaken waterfront development projects. Some have failed while others survive and flourish. In most instances the successful projects have provided valuable lessons about critical requirements. Some of the most important factors:

- \* waterfront projects must have high quality, require high standards but must be flexible;
- \* implementation of any waterfront project must be people-oriented and achieve consensus from the general public and the business community;
- \* waterfront projects must be unique to the community and not be a "repeat" of other areas;
- \* implementation must occur in "doable" phases, especially in smaller cities like Gautier; but the components must be of such size as to have an impact and generate activity and investment;
- \* projects must involve the expertise and financial resources of local, state and federal governments, in partnership with the private sector.



or supply systems contaminated by salt water intrusion, or water lines that collapse with periodic flooding.

By the same token, not all land uses belong on the water. Here, lifestyles may come in serious conflict with obligations. Having the waterfront as the backdrop for most human activities may become a luxury sooner than currently thought. Although many industries and their support services require waterborne transportation, their actual processing or production facilities can be located almost anywhere near surface transportation facilities. Industries which are truly water dependent should have adequate space reserved for their use, and facilities that minimize flooding and shoreline retreat should be encouraged.

And when one really thinks about it, how many commercial establishments and residential developments need to be located on the water? It sure adds to the ambience! But perhaps compact concentrations of mixed uses should be encouraged for the businesses and offices that benefit from a waterfront location. As wetlands preservation, coastal erosion and the potential for sea level rise diminish access to coastlines, the scarcity and cost of waterfront land may automatically control the use of waterfront land.

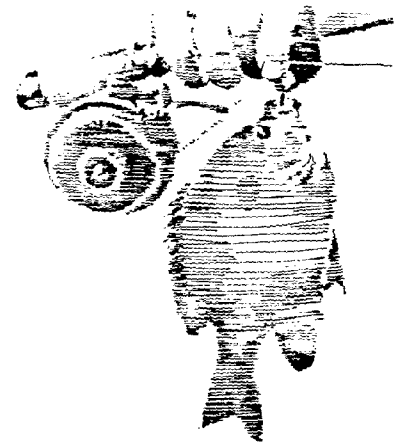


## SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding sections of this study provide a general overview of the existing shoreline and environmental issues, public opinion, business climate and other factors that influence the potential for enhancing Gautier's waterfront resources. Collectively, these projects can provide both economic and recreational benefits to the community, if properly approached and managed. The opportunity areas suggested in this study are a result of the better ideas generated during the planning process, and are depicted in graphics form, in order to assist their implementation.

To implement the concepts and opportunities presented in this study, several distinct and dedicated efforts must be undertaken by both the public and private sectors. Because of the varying scope and magnitude of the five proposed waterfront development options, an individual implementation strategy must be prepared that matches the requirements of each of these projects. Obviously the larger the project, the more difficult and complex the steps to implementation will be. The requirements for redeveloping the Graveline Boat Launch and Pier will be far less than the development requirements for the West Pascagoula River waterfront concept.

The feasibility of the more speculative proposals is subject to further analysis as well as the expressed support and involvement of the private sector and the general public. The accompanying project schedules suggest the major steps or activities that should be observed to chart a course of action for implementation of each of the five proposals.



Overall, the City of Gautier should develop a comprehensive waterfront policy by adopting this report as a guideline to development and, by allocating the necessary resources to ensure timely implementation of all projects. Hence, the proposed plans are only as strong as the support and leadership provided by the city to achieve a continuity of action over an extended period of time.

Two general recommendations are suggested to help sustain the momentum this study has achieved thus far. These recommendations will establish a foundation for future action that can be applied to any one of the five major waterfront options. The recommendations are:

1. The City should establish the on-going capacity to refine each of the proposed projects. This can be accomplished by either creating a standing committee concerned with waterfront development issues, or by assigning implementation responsibilities to an existing municipal entity such as the City's Economic Development Committee.
2. Gautier's governing body should provide financial support and technical resources to refine the proposed design concepts, and to prepare needed engineering, market and environmental feasibility studies. This can be done by requesting follow-on assistance from the Bureau of Marine Resources, by making allocations from the annual budget for more detailed planning, and by seeking technical assistance from the area economic development agencies. A commitment of additional local funds will be essential to acquire matching funds from potential state and federal funding sources.

## Development Strategies

### Graveline Bayou Boat Launch/Pier

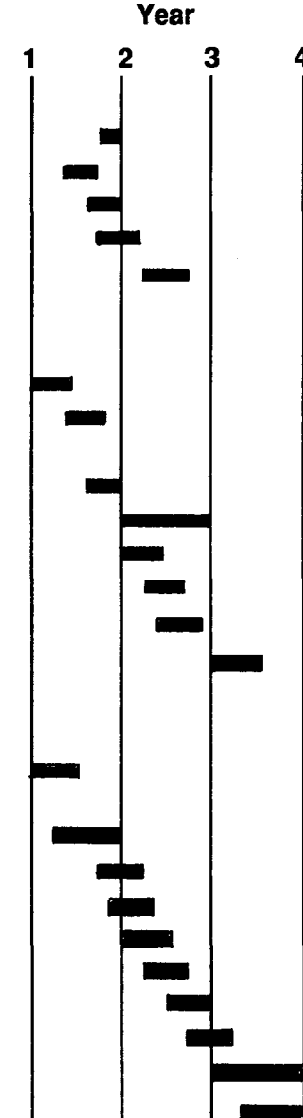
- Conduct neighborhood public hearing
- Prepare detailed plans and specifications, cost estimates, environmental services
- Request construction assistance from Bureau of Marine Resources
- Budget or secure construction funds
- Initiate construction

### Shepard State Park Waterfront Access

- Form task force of local and state officials
- Evaluate Shepard State Park Master Plan and develop revised Capital Improvement Plan for phased implementation
- Secure development funds from Division of State Parks, City of Gautier, Jackson County and others
- Initiate first phase of construction
- Prepare plans, specifications, cost estimates, environmental studies for park extension
- Conduct public meetings
- Request donation of property from Shepard family to extend boundaries
- Initiate construction of Shepard State Park extension

### West Pascagoula River Development

- Form waterfront development task force - comprised of affected property owners, local, county and state officials, economic development interests
- Prepare detailed marketing study, site plans, cost estimates, environmental studies, impact analysis
- Develop and establish project parameters, design standards, land use controls, business incentives
- Conduct public meetings
- Finalize waterfront development plan
- Establish public/private partnerships through official economic development mechanism or agency
- Develop and adapt public/private capital improvements schedule
- Obtain financial resources for public and private capital improvements
- Initiate Phase I of waterfront development plan
- Continue planning and resource development for additional phases



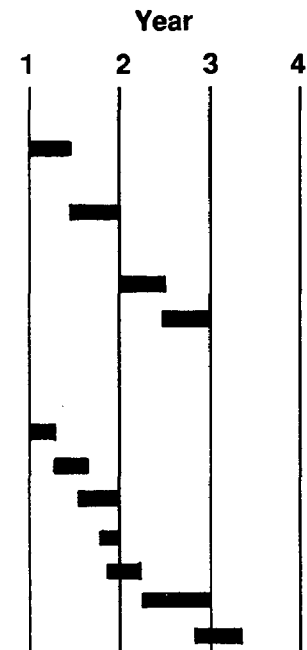
## Development Strategies

### Lower Mary Walker Bayou/Fishing Camp Enclave

- Form project area task force of property owners, city/county officials, economic development and business interests
- Prepare detailed market feasibility study, land use plan, business assistance plan, and public infrastructure requirements
- Initiate business development incentive measures, support services, marketing program
- Begin Phase I public infrastructure enhancement

### Community College Public Access/Recreation (Upper Mary Walker Bayou)

- Officially propose joint project between Jackson County Junior College and City of Gautier
- Prepare plans, specifications, cost estimates and environmental schedule
- Develop interlocal agreement for joint project, assign areas of responsibility
- Develop Phase I capital improvement construction schedule
- Appropriate Phase I construction funds
- Initiate construction
- Develop plans for additional phases





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